

# Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons

## *The Radio and a Speech: FDR's Arsenal of Democracy*

Standard: I. Culture  
VI. Power, Authority, and Governance  
VIII. Science, Technology, and Society  
IX. Global Connections  
X. Civic Ideals and Practices

Grade Level: 9–12

Objectives: The student will:

- Assess the impact of “listening” to a presidential speech
- Analyze a speech by Franklin Delano Roosevelt
- Follow the path of the United States from a neutral nation to being the “arsenal of democracy”

Time: 1 class period

Materials: Documents: **1940** *The Arsenal of Democracy*

Resources: Photograph: *Listening to the Radio*

Image: *Radio Cut-outs*

Exercises: The Radio and the Speech

Materials: Heavy duty paper stock to make copies of radio

Procedures:

1. Arrange students and desks in groups of 4–5.
2. Place a radio (prepared before class) on desks for each group.
3. Show the photograph, *Listening to the Radio*, and explain how this was THE technology available at the time for hearing presidential speeches.
4. Explain that they will listen to a speech by President Franklin Roosevelt just as people did on December 29, 1940:  
<http://millercenter.org/scripps/archive/speeches/detail/3319>  
*Note*: If this speech is too long for a class period, play only sections of the speech. Listen to it before class and, using the time on playing bar, select the sections you would like to use.
5. Provide copies of the document, *The Arsenal of Democracy*, for students to follow as they listen. (If the teacher has selected only sections of the speech for listening, direct students to these specific extracts on the written copy.)

- 6.** Have students underline or highlight what they consider “the most significant remarks” made by FDR as they listen to the speech.
- 7.** Complete the information requested in the exercise, *The Radio and a Speech*. Students should select five (5) comments they have highlighted and explain why they are significant.
- 8.** Discuss students’ selections.
- 9.** Additional questions:
  - a.** Describe FDR’s delivery as a public speaker.
  - b.** Would this speech have retained the interest of its listeners in 1940?
  - c.** Did the President provide enough information for the American public to understand why the United States needed to become the arsenal of democracy?
  - d.** Did he instill confidence in the U.S. Government?
  - e.** How did this speech set the United States on a different course to deal with the war in Europe? ■